

The Old Law Society is Dead

Since the summer of 2006, the Law Society of England and Wales as we knew it was replaced by three bodies with three distinct functions, governance and structure.

In January 2005, the old Law Society took the decision to split its role into three. The first is its representative role (Representation and Professional Services), that is its 'trade union' role representing the interests of over 110,000 solicitors in England and Wales. The second is its regulatory role (Regulation Service) and thirdly its consumer complaints handling role, investigating complaints against solicitors (Consumer Complaints Service).

Since the split the three bodies have not always spoken with one voice highlighting their distinctive functions, governance and structure.

Since January 2007 the distinction has been further fine-tuned with the regulatory and professional services now referred to as The Law Society. The new Law Society role is negotiating with and lobbying the profession's regulators, government and others, to offering training and advice and to help protect and promote solicitors across England and Wales.

The President of The Law Society (Regulation and Professional Services Role) remains Fiona Woolf and the Chief Executive responsible for the day to day running is Desmond Hudson.

The Chief Executive of the Regulatory side is Anthony Townsend. This body is now known as the Solicitors Regulatory Authority and is responsible for all regulatory and disciplinary matters and sets, monitors and enforces standards for solicitors across England and Wales. It acts solely in the public interest.

Deborah Evans is the Chief Executive of the Consumer Complaints Service which is now known as the Legal Complaints Service and handles complaints from members of the public wishing to make complaints about solicitors.